

IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims and their status as of this Amendment is as follows:

- 1.(Currently amended) A method for the electroless deposition of a desired metal layer on one or more selected portions of a substrate surface, wherein the substrate has a film of indium tin oxide (ITO) formed thereon and wherein the method includes the steps of:  
applying a masking layer onto the substrate surface, said masking layer adapted to have one or more apertures formed therein so as to expose the one or more selected portions of the substrate surface;  
exposing the one or more selected portions of the substrate surface to a colloidal suspension of catalytic particles adapted to adsorb to the substrate surface and to enhance deposition of the a desired metal layer thereon; and  
exposing the one or more selected portions of the substrate surface to an ionic solution containing ions of the desired metal to enable formation of the metal layer on said one or more selected portions.
- 2.(Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the one or more apertures are formed in the masking layer after applying the layer to the substrate surface.
- 3.(Original) A method according to claim 2 wherein at least some of the one or more apertures of the masking layer lie over one or more portions of the ITO film.
- 4.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 3, wherein the colloidal suspension includes particles of catalytic metal.
- 5.(Original) A method according to claim 4 , wherein, when the substrate surface includes a film of ITO formed thereon, the catalytic metal and the material of the substrate are selected so that no substantial adsorption of the catalytic metal occurs on the substrate material.

6.(Currently amended) A method according to claim 4 ~~or claim 5~~, wherein the catalytic metal is palladium.

7.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 4 to 6, wherein the catalytic metal particles are polymer-stabilised.

8.(Currently amended) A method according to claim 7 , wherein the catalytic metal particles are stabilised with polyvinyl alcohol, ~~poly(vinylpyrrolidone)~~ poly(vinylpyrrolidone) or a combination ~~of these~~ thereof.

9.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 4 to 6, wherein the catalytic metal particles are stabilised with a solution containing tin ions.

10.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 5 to 9, wherein the substrate material is glass.

11.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 10, wherein the masking layer is formed of a polymeric material to which no substantial adherence of the catalytic particles occurs.

12.(Original) A method according to claim 11, wherein the polymeric material is selected from the group consisting of suitable polycarbonates, fluorinated polymers, cellophane, polyimide and acrylate-based polymers.

13.(Currently amended) A method according to claim 11 ~~or claim 12~~, wherein the polymeric material is a photoresist.

14.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 13, wherein the masking layer is formed of a dry film resist.

15.(Original) A method according to claim 14, wherein the dry film resist is selected from the group consisting of Asahi Chemicals Sunfort™ resists and DuPonts Riston™ resists.

16.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 11 to 15, wherein the one or more apertures in the masking layer are formed using UV lithography, a laser or screening means.

17.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 16 wherein, prior to the step of exposing the selected portions of the substrate to the colloidal solution, the layered substrate is cleaned to remove any residues of polymeric or organic material.

18.(Original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the cleaning is effected by plasma cleaning or UV ozone cleaning techniques.

19.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 18, wherein the step of exposing the one or more selected portions of the substrate to the colloidal solution is effected by dipping the substrate containing the masking layer into a bath of the colloidal solution.

20.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 19, wherein, after the step of exposing the one or more selected portions of the substrate to the colloidal solution, the selected portions are rinsed with de-ionised water.

21.(Original) A method according to claim 20 wherein, after the rinsing step, the selected portions are dried to remove substantially all of the water from the selected portions.

22.(Original) A method according to claim 21, wherein the drying step includes

placing the layered substrate in an oven.

23.(Original) A method according to claim 21, wherein the drying step includes blowing a stream of gas over the layered substrate.

24.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 23~~ claim 21, wherein the drying step includes both placing the layered substrate in an oven and blowing it with a stream of gas.

25.(Original) A method according to claim 23, wherein the step of exposing the one or more selected portions to the ionic solution is effected by dipping the substrate containing the masking layer into a bath of the ionic solution.

26.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 25 wherein, after formation of the metal layer, the masking layer is removed.

27.(Original) A method according to claim 26 wherein a strongly basic solution is used to facilitate removal of the masking layer.

28.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 24, wherein the masking layer is removed prior to the step of exposing the one or more selected portions to the ionic solution.

29.(Currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 28, wherein the desired metal layer is formed with a metal selected from the group consisting of copper, nickel, chromium, molybdenum, tantalum and any alloy of these metals.

30.(Currently amended) A method according to claim 29, wherein the ~~desired~~ metal is selected from copper and nickel.

Claim 31 (Cancelled)

32.(Currently amended) A product made according to the method of: ~~any one or more of claims 1 to 31~~  
providing a substrate surface, having a film of indium tin oxide (ITO) formed thereon, for  
electroless deposition of a desired metal layer on one or more selected portions  
of said substrate surface;  
applying a masking layer onto the substrate surface, said masking layer adapted to  
have one or more apertures formed therein so as to expose one or more  
selected portions of the substrate surface;  
exposing the one or more selected portions of the substrate surface to a colloidal  
suspension of catalytic particles adapted to adsorb to the substrate surface and  
to enhance deposition of a desired metal layer thereon; and  
exposing the one or more selected portions of the substrate surface to an ionic solution  
containing ions of the desired metal to enable formation of the metal layer on  
said one or more selected portions.